

Special points of interest:

- Comments from Parole Board Chairman Maureen Walsh
- Profile of Parole Board Member Candace Kochin
- Interstate Compact Legislation Expands Duties of Parole's Interstate Compact Unit

January, 2006

Interagency Effort to Smooth Reentry

By Donald Giancioppo, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Parole Board

I know there have been many questions among staff about the Parole Board and Department of Correction "Tier" groups, so I thought I would take this opportunity to provide an update of a meeting that occurred on Tuesday, January 10, 2006, that may help describe the initiative.

But first, for background, in the fall of 2004, the National Institute of Corrections sent three technical advisors to Massachusetts at the request of the Executive Office of Public Safety to evaluate and assist in improving offender reentry efforts.

Several representatives from EOPS, DOC and Parole met with staff from NIC and provided an update on current projects and operational overviews. After the two-day meeting, NIC recognized that Massachusetts was ac-

tively involved in improving offender reentry, but that the Parole Board and Department of Correction needed to develop some type of collaborative, ongoing system that could identify and

formed.

Tier I consists of Undersecretary of Public Safety Patrick Bradley, Massachusetts Parole Board Chairman Maureen Walsh, and Department of Correction Commissioner Kathleen Dennehy. Tier I

meets frequently and provides direction to Tier II. Tier II was set up with DOC Associate Commissioner of Reentry Veronica Madden and I as the co-chairmen. The group held its first meeting in 2005 and comprises directors, managers, and supervisory

staff from DOC and Parole. Parole representatives include Parole Board members Tom Merigan and Candace Kochin, Tim Zada, Mike Brown, Marcia Curtin, Kira Dunn, Dave Quinlan, (continued on page 4)



MAP Program graduates Marvin Young (left), George Ortiz, and Louis Partin at the MAP graduation ceremony Jan. 13.

(Story on page 5)

address existing issues between the two agencies. As a result, the tier groups were

Brockton Mayor honors Brockton PO Charlie Howard

On January 7, the City of Brockton presented Region 7 Parole Officer Charlie Howard an official citation for his 30 years of dedicated service in public safety. This was the last official action of Mayor John T. Yunits, Jr. who left office at the end of December after serving a decade as mayor.

"Officer Howard is a shining example of public servants giving their all in order to

protect their community," said Mayor Yunits. "Whether arresting offenders in the reintegration process or arresting parole violators and returning them to prison, Officer Howard displays much initiative and is a credit to the Massachusetts Parole Board. His positive job performance is worthy of recognition. I am honored to make this presentation," said Mayor Yunits.

PO Howard, who hung the citation on the wall of his office, said that receiving the citation came as a great surprise. He has worked on numerous safety initiatives throughout Mayor Yunits's leadership, including Operation Cease Fire, the Safe Neighborhood Initiative, Safety First, National Night Out Against Crime, and the Impact Players Project. (picture on pg. 4)

Chairman's Column

By Parole Board Chairman Maureen Walsh

Thanks to the hard work of the Reentry Unit in creating a monthly newsletter, I am able to highlight specific areas of the agency I think are worthwhile to discuss. This month, there are two separate but related issues that deal directly with our mission of effectively reintegrating offenders into the community that I think are worthy of further discussion. These two areas are "Decision-Making Guidelines" and "Graduated Sanctions."

However, before I discuss the specific initiatives when it comes to these two areas, I do want to emphasize an important point. That is that the changes that are occurring in these two areas as well as other areas of the agency are not necessarily motivated by problems within the agency. Rather, when initiatives are being discussed and proposed, more often than not it is because we want to institutionalize and formalize the good work that is being done in the agency. Now, when reviewing whatever area that is being discussed, it does present us with an opportunity to modify or change certain things in order to make the system better. However, this should not be interpreted as "things going badly." Instead, just the opposite: we want to improve our systems and build in areas that we have not had the opportunity to improve in the past.

That being said, there was a recognized need from Parole Board members for transparency in our daily operations and to have a policy of decision-making that is consistent and reflective of the good work of the agency. As you may be aware, there is an existing document from 1991 that reflects a thorough analysis of the Parole Board's philosophy at that time. While the document is excellent and it is clear that much effort went into the creation of this document, it was also clear that there is no real ownership of this policy by the current board. Now, some fifteen years later, the time has come to revisit the issues related to parole decision-making and update the agency's practices and policies to make them consistent with board philosophy.

Just a few weeks ago, we engaged the professional support of the Center for Effective Policy to work with the Massachusetts Parole Board and create this document. I would imagine that this will be a short-term project that could be finished as early as the spring and will be looking forward to input from the various divisions.

In addition, the graduated sanctions project kicked off its pilot recently with a meeting in Medfield with a group of parole officers. Each parole region will have two parole officers who are working on this pilot and applying graduated sanctions to parole violators. Again, this was done so that we could effectively and efficiently intervene with offenders if they showed signs of relapsing into criminal behavior (the graduated sanctions project is for technical violations of parole and not for new criminal arrests). The intent is to create a state-wide approach and a system (based on research and data) that will assist us in the treatment and supervision of offenders.

I am very pleased with the progress of both initiatives and am looking forward to more regular updates about them

"When initiatives are being proposed, more often than not it is because we want to institutionalize and formalize the good work that is being done in the agency."

**- Parole Board Chairman
Maureen Walsh**

Q&A with Parole Board Member Candace Kochin

"I participate in making decisions while protecting the community, at the same time, I am able to balance reentry and reintegration."

**-Parole Board Member
Candace Kochin**

Candace Kochin was appointed to the Parole Board in 1999. Her current term expires in 2006. Prior to being appointed to the board, Ms. Kochin worked for the Hampshire County Sheriff's Office as the Director of Treatment and Assistant Deputy Superintendent. Before this she worked as a probation officer with Hampshire Superior Court Probation, a Victim/Witness Assistant with the Northwestern District Attorney, and a secretary in district court. Ms. Kochin received a Bachelor of Arts in history with a minor in psychology and arts from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. She attended the American Institute for Foreign Studies in Greece and Italy to study art history. She has been a speaker for various groups and serves on the advisory board at Greenfield Community College.



Q: Why did you decide to apply for membership on the board?

A. After attending parole hearings as a Director of Treatment for incarcerated individuals, I believed my background and experience would make me a viable candidate for a position on the Massachusetts Parole Board.

Q: What do you find most satisfying or enjoyable about being on the board?

A. I participate in making decisions while protecting the community; at the same time, I am able to balance reentry and reintegration.

Q: What do you think is the most challenging aspect of the job?

A. The most challenging aspect is trying to achieve the proper balance between community safety and offender reentry back into the community.

Q: How do you think your prior experience has informed your work on the board?

A. Based on my past experience associated with the criminal justice system including law enforcement as well as treatment for offenders, I am familiar with a diverse perspective which would inform my decision-making.

PO Charlie Howard honored by Brockton Mayor

(continued from page 1)



Region 7 Parole Officer Charlie Howard accepts a citation from Mark O'Reilly, Chief of Staff to the former Brockton Mayor John T. Yunits.

PO Howard began his career in law enforcement with the Department of Correction and has worked as a parole officer for the past 20 years in both the Brockton and New Bedford offices.

"I think it's fair to say that there has never been this type of cooperative environment and opportunity to improve and streamline the operational effectiveness between the two agencies."

-Parole Board Director Don Giancioppo on the Parole Board/Department of Correction Tier I and II committees.

Tier I and II Committees work together to improve reentry

(continued from page 1)

...Dave Sullivan, Tom Clark, Lynn Ferraris and Tina Hurley. In addition, both Harvard and Northeastern University have provided technical assistance and facilitation throughout.

Back in the spring of 2005, Tier II identified six main areas for the group to address: 1. daily operational gaps and inconsistencies between the Parole Board and the Department of Correction, 2. information technology issues, 3. risk assessment tools, 4. sex offender management, 5. insuring that both agencies are utilizing evidence based practices, 6. training issues.

Subgroups for the first three areas were then created and Tier II members were assigned and charged with identifying specific issues and then developing proposed resolutions. Since April, the groups have met frequently and the results have been outstanding, which brings us to Tuesday's meeting. Tuesday was an opportunity for the members to get together and review where we came from, where we are, and where we need to go. What

is evident is that in less than a year both agencies have made great strides in understanding each other's operations, terminology, shared goals and objectives.

On Tuesday, we reviewed what has occurred including RRC staff attending and being engaged in DOC triage meetings, CPO's visiting RRC's, how processes for transitioning parolees and wrapped up offenders have significantly improved, and how both staff have deepened their respective understanding and appreciation for their counterparts.

In addition, an information technology grant is in the works to provide a bi-directional flow of information between the two agencies' case management databases; SPIRIT¹ and IMS. A vendor has been selected to work with both Parole and DOC to create a validated risk assessment tool. Parole staff now have access and training to IMS, and DOC staff have been provided access and training to SPIRIT¹. Also, both agencies have repre-

sentation on the Executive Office of Public Safety Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Offender Management grant team and the Center for Effective Public Policy* training grant was awarded to Massachusetts which will provide training for both Parole and DOC staff in the upcoming months. These are only a few examples of what has been accomplished in a relatively short period of time.

This is not to say that we think there still aren't a lot of issues to address and everyone on Tier II recognizes we have only scratched the surface. However, I think it's fair to say that there has never been this type of cooperative environment and opportunity to improve and streamline the operational effectiveness between the two agencies. And while we can all feel proud of the work that has been accomplished, so far, what's most important is for us to keep in mind that the main goal of our efforts is to improve offender reentry and public safety in Massachusetts!

* Visit www.cepp.com for more information about CEPP's mission and work.

Interstate Compact Unit Expands with Passage of New Interstate Compact Legislation

In late October, Governor Mitt Romney signed legislation authorizing the Massachusetts Parole Board to oversee state-wide participation in the Interstate Compact for Adult Offender Supervision. The legislation entered Massachusetts into the new compact, which was created in 2002 to replace an earlier version. Massachusetts was the last state in the nation to join the latest version of the compact, which regulates the interstate movement of offenders on parole and probation.

Parole Board Chairman Maureen Walsh has been named Commissioner and Administrator of the compact.

The Parole Board is now responsible for all administrative aspects related to the compact in Massachusetts.

"We've assumed the administrative function for probation cases in addition to parole cases," said Donald LaFratta, Director of the Interstate Compact Unit for the Parole Board.

To accommodate the increased workload, the Parole Board is interviewing candidates for two new Program Coordinator positions and a Word Processing Operator position for the unit, which presently consists of four staff members: Mr. LaFratta, Richard Vernick Ronald Rapaport, and Julie DiCenzo.

Prior to entering the new compact this fall, Massachusetts belonged to what was known as the "old compact," said Mr. LaFratta. "Massachusetts never stopped doing business with states in the old compact, and we entered into a Memorandum

of Understanding with most of the states which had repealed the old compact," he said.

To transfer to another state, a Massachusetts parolee or inmate awaiting parole must put in a request to his or her Field Parole Officer or Institutional Parole Officer. The applicant must then complete a series of forms which the Parole Board will send to authorities in the receiving state. After they have investigated the request, authorities will notify the Massachusetts Parole Board of the decision.

In 1998, it was decided at the national level that the compact should be revised, due to its inability to create new rules, its lack of recognition, and its questionable enforcement power.

(continued on pg. 6)

MAP Participants Honored in Emotional Graduation Ceremony

In a ballroom with marble walls, gold trim, and chandeliers, seven ex-offenders were honored Friday, January 13th for completing a 14-week job and life skills program. The 58th graduation ceremony for the Moving Ahead Program [MAP] was attended by a crowd of more than 30, including friends, family, MAP alumni, as well as Parole Board Executive Director Donald Giancioppo, and Director of Reentry Kira Dunn. The ceremony was held at the spectacular circa 1904 Gamble Mansion on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston.

Founded in 1995, at the Boston shelter St. Francis House, MAP provides men and women who have experienced chronic homelessness, unemployment, and substance abuse with job readiness and life skills training. The class of graduates included five parolees whose participation was made possible through a Violent Incarceration and Truth in Sentencing [VOI/TIS] grant awarded to St. Francis House by the Massachusetts Parole Board.

In his opening remarks, MAP Program Director Fred Smith thanked the Parole Board for its support. "Through the graces of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Parole Board, St. Francis House has been able to finance a lot more people coming from incarcerated situations," said Mr. Smith.

During the ceremony, graduates were presented with a graduation certificate, a Certificate of Completion in Computer Applications, and an Alumni Card.

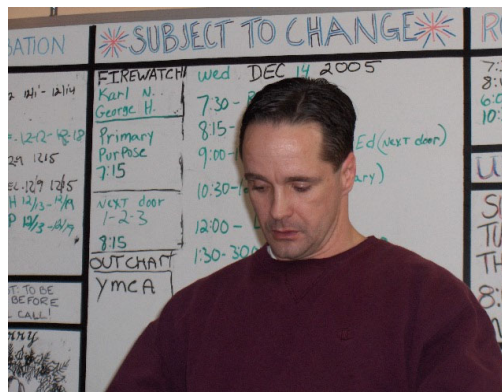


MAP Program graduate Marvin Young recounts his MAP experience at a graduation ceremony January 13.

**Massachusetts Parole Board
Reentry Unit**
10 Park Plaza, Suite 3720
Phone: 617-725-3317
Fax: 617-725-0260
Web: www.mass.gov/parole



North Cottage program participants were presented with certificates for successfully completing a substance abuse treatment program at the Norton facility. The Parole Board provided the opportunity for parolees to participate in the North Cottage Program through the Violent Incarceration and Truth in Sentencing (VOI/TIS) grant.



A graduate of the North Cottage substance abuse treatment program shares his story with the audience at a December graduation ceremony.

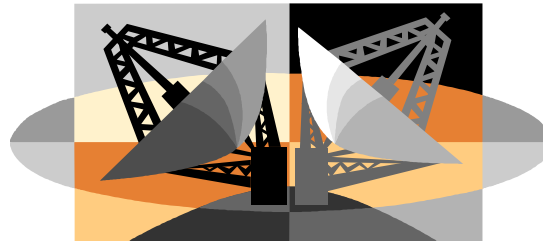


Interstate Compact Unit (continued from page 5)

...“There was a large group of offenders— about a quarter of a million— who were traveling unsupervised,” said Mr. La-Fratta. Another problem was that the compact did not account for non-traditional offenders, such as lifetime parolees.

While the new compact is intended to be more inclusive, it in fact has a smaller eligibility profile than the older version, said Mr. LaFratta. Under the new compact, the receiving state is required to accept the offender if he or she is a resident or has resident family there, has more than 90 days of supervision remaining, has a valid plan of supervision, and is able to ob-

tain financial support or employment in the state. Offenders not eligible for transfer under the new compact may relocate to another state but remain under the supervision of the sentenc-



ing state. In such cases, the receiving state may not have been notified of the offender's presence.

One major benefit to joining the new compact will be access to a national database of parolees and probationers, estimated to come online in late 2006. The

National Commission is exploring how this databases might be linked to criminal justice applications used by law enforcement personnel across the nation.

The new compact has established a staff at the national level, with a headquarters in Kentucky. Having paid staff has allowed for a more professional and timely dissemination of rules and Commission-issued advisory opinions which will better serve to improve compact operations nationwide, said Mr. La-Fratta. The Commission has also strongly urged that each state establish a council to advise on matters related to the compact. It is hoped that this council, through its members, will be better positioned to move compact related issues to the forefront of the state's priority list.